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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7696th meeting
Wednesday, 25 May 2016, 10.25 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Diallo
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa (17 to 22 May 2016)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa (17 to 22 May 2016)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the two co-leads of the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa, namely, Egypt and the United Kingdom.

The representative of the United Kingdom shall now make a statement on the Council's visit to Somalia.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to brief my colleagues on the Council's visit to Somalia, to be followed by your own briefing on the visit to Kenya and Egypt. I want to begin by thanking you for your initiative to organize the visit to the Horn of Africa, which was an extremely useful and timely one. I want also to thank our colleagues from the Secretariat for their role in organizing extremely valuable programmes, and the Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representatives who went on the trip. My message to those who did not is: "Bad luck. You missed a good and very productive visit."

During the Somalia leg of the visit, the Council had an opportunity to reaffirm its oversight, in detail, of what is happening in the country and to reaffirm its commitment to continue the journey with the Somali people as they progress towards stability and prosperity. The visit came at a crucial time in an important year for Somalia. We are halfway between 2012 and 2020. In 2012 the Somali people set out their four-year vision, entitled Vision 2016, which is due to culminate in elections in August. By 2020 there will be one person, one vote elections in Somalia, which will conclude the transitional phase.

The electoral process is a central part of that transition and one that, as the Council, we have paid a lot of attention to over the years. However, when we arrived in Mogadishu, on Thursday, that process was in deadlock. The President and the regional Presidents whom we met had reached an agreement on the electoral model earlier in the year. but the Parliament had not been able to endorse the agreement, leading to a delay in preparations for the August elections. We therefore met President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Prime Minister Sharmarke and the regional leaders of Puntland, the South-West administration and Galmudug to express our concern at that delay and to urge swift adoption of the model.

The President gave assurances that he would continue to work for the Parliament's adoption of the model. He also said that, if that were not possible, he would use his presidential decree, which is absolutely within his rights to do, in order to get the model validated and endorsed. I am very pleased to say that, shortly after the Council left Mogadishu, in the early hours of Sunday morning, President Hassan Sheik Mohamud did indeed take the necessary step of issuing a presidential decree to ensure that there were no extension to the constitutionally mandated terms of Somalia's executive and legislative orders. I think that was a good outcome of the visit to the central question of the electoral process in the run-up to elections, which are due to take place in August. I also think — taking a step back from the details — that this is an example of how a Council visit can make a positive difference, either in terms of preventing things from getting worse, in terms of preventive diplomacy, or — in this case — as a way of encouraging a country to do the right thing and actually to move things forward in a positive direction. I am very glad that we were able to do that. That is a summary of what we are discussing on the political track.

We also spent a lot of time on security issues. We had a good meeting with the Somali Deputy Prime Minister, who is in charge of developing the national security architecture for Somalia. That will provide, among other things, civilian oversight of the Somali security forces. We also met the Special Representative of the African Union for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ambassador Francisco Madeira, other senior AMISOM leaders and the leadership of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. Between them, they outlined the scale of the challenges ahead. I think it was clear to all on the Council's side of the table that security remained a very significant concern in Somalia. As such, I want to take this moment to pay tribute to the men and women of

AMISOM, who are doing sterling work in difficult circumstances to try to bring stability and security to Somalia, as well as to the men and women of the Somali national army and the police who, likewise, are doing all they can to fight Al-Shabaab and to make their country safe for the future. I think that we owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Some of them paid the ultimate sacrifice in that work. We need to continue working with AMISOM and the Somali national army and police in order to create the sort of conditions that will allow Somalia to become a much more peaceful, stable and normal member of the international community.

The challenges for AMISOM are significant and we will have an opportunity — as we will shortly renew its mandate — to look at those in more detail. There are issues related to the desire of troop-contributing countries to continue, or not, their commitment. There are also issues related to commander control and coordination. I think those of us who were on the trip have come back with a much clearer sense of the scale of those challenges. Similarly, with the Somali national army, I was very struck by the scale of what still remains to be done. A lot of us have done a lot in that area over the years, but a huge amount remains to be done in order to allow the Somalis to create a genuinely effective set of security forces. I think there is a lack of clear coordination, both on the Somali side and on the international side. I also think that, between us, we need to do a better job of coordinating the various offers of assistance in terms of the security architecture in order to maximize the impact of that assistance.

I also want to say a word about the broader context. We were able to talk to United Nations and other actors who are involved in the region and in other parts of Somalia's development. We looked at the humanitarian situation and sustainable development. We were able to look at both the long-term consequences of the conflict in Somalia and also some of the root causes. That, in my view, is an essential part of our work on every issue facing us on the Security Council's agenda. As part of that wider work, I was very glad that we were able to meet representatives of civil society. One of the groups was made up of women who are active in Somali politics and in ensuring that the role of women in Somalia goes from strength to strength. They underlined the importance of the Federal Government of Somalia adhering to its commitment to reserve 30 per cent of seats in both the upper and lower houses for women. The Security Council voiced its strong support for that commitment during our visit, as it had done in press statements earlier this year. The lack of diversity in the Security Council in terms of gender equality was also notable, and noticed by those women.

Finally, I want to thank Michael Keating, who is doing an excellent job as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. I also thank his outstanding team in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, which made the visit of the Council possible and allowed us to take full advantage of the visit and advance this crucial agenda. I am glad to say that the Council issued a press statement on Monday welcoming the progress on the political track. I know that we will all want to continue to follow developments in Somalia very closely and to support Somalia throughout this critical year.

I thank the President of the Council once again for organizing the visit.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now provide a briefing in my national capacity.

Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation for the confidence the members of the Security Council placed in my delegation during the preparations for the Council's visit to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt last week.

The visit made it possible the Council to achieve three important objectives. First, the Council demonstrated its support for the national efforts made by Somalia to complete the political process. Secondly, after our visit to Kenya, the Council was able to clarify the need for more coordination and cooperation between efforts made at the national and local levels in order to face the challenges with regard to Somali refugees. Thirdly, the Council took the lead in organizing for the first time a consultative meeting with an important regional organization, namely, the League of Arab States.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, who shared responsibility for the preparation of the Council's visit, for his coordination and cooperation. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia, Mr. Michael Keating, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil El-Araby, for their efforts in preparing for our visit.

I would like to stress that the Security Council's visit to Somalia illustrated the importance of the timing

of visits by the Council to regions of interest. Indeed, the visit to Mogadishu sent an appropriate, well-timed message to all parties in the country that the Council is interested in the achievements realized since 2012, that all Somalis need to work together to achieve reconciliation and peace, and that the Council will not overlook anything that might obstruct the political process. The latter is something that I intend to discuss in detail at a later stage.

The Council's visit to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, included an important meeting with President Kenyatta, who set forth his views on the challenges of the Somali political process, the need to establish a Somali army that is capable of shouldering the country's security responsibilities, the challenges facing the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Somalia, and the requests of Member States for increased support for the Mission. The meeting also included a clear exchange of views on financing the salaries of AMISOM personnel, as well as criticism addressed to Council on its members' commitment to human rights and the fact that some AMISOM personnel have been involved in illegal activities.

The meeting with the President also touched upon one of the most important topics for the international community today, namely, the refugee phenomenon and the socioeconomic and security challenges it poses to receiving countries like Kenya. Accordingly, we discussed the need for the international community to provide greater support to receiving countries to meet these challenges. President Kenyatta urged Council members to support his country's decision to close the Dadaab refugee camp. Council members in turn stressed their appreciation for Kenya's efforts to assume the burden that it faces while stressing the need for Member States to respect their international commitments with regard to the situation of refugees.

The visit to Nairobi also included a meeting with high-level ministerial officials at which discussions took place on logistics and on AMISOM's needs in terms of helicopters and other means of transportation and equipment, on the need to increase the Mission's strength and adjust its mandate accordingly, and on closing the budget gap that resulted from the reduced financing that the Mission has been receiving. We also discussed the security challenges posed by the presence of large numbers of Somali refugees in Kenya and addressed accusations that these refugees have been taking part in terrorist activities. There were also discussions about the negotiations between Kenya and the Jubaland administration on the resettlement of Somali refugees.

The Security Council visit culminated in a key meeting to address the efforts made by certain circles within the United Nations to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, the difficulty of humanitarian workers gaining access to all areas that are in need of assistance, and the challenges resulting from the increase in recruitment of children by the Al-Shabaab movement. We reviewed the lack of favourable conditions for the resettlement of thousands of Somali refugees and the unavailability of clear information on the presence of terrorist elements inside refugee camps.

During our visit to Africa, I was honoured to accompany the Council to Cairo. At the first-ever joint consultative meeting between the Security Council and the Council of the League of Arab States, we engaged in a frank exchange of views on such issues as the peace process in the Middle East, refugees, migration and developments in Somalia and Libya. The joint consultative meeting set an important and noteworthy precedent that could lead to the establishment of a stable mechanism for coordination and discussion between the Council and the Arab League Council of Ministers. The Arab League is an important regional organization that could play a significant role in addressing the many topics of common interest between it and the Security Council, with a view to coordinating our positions and becoming more responsive to the challenges that the Arab region is facing, foremost among which are terrorism and the way forward in the Middle East peace process.

The discussions led to a consensus of opinion on the need to coordinate the positions of the Arab League and the Security Council, particularly with regard to support for the political process in Libya and for the country's institutions, which need to fulfil their tasks so that they can win the confidence of the citizens of the country. To achieve stability, the country needs to put an end to competition among Libyan factions, resolve the impasse between the Presidential Council and the House of Representatives, and fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) on Libyan territory through a common military command. Also addressed were issues related to refugee crises, including the need to protect their rights and counter the Islamophobia and xenophobia facing Arab countries and the world at large.

The meeting also discussed the need to coordinate international efforts with those of countries in the Arab region to create the conditions for Israel to come to the negotiating table to reach an agreement on the basis of the 1967 borders, with all parties renouncing violence, and addressing the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. Arab efforts and the initiatives of France and the Quartet to revive the peace process were also praised. We also discussed the challenges Somalia is facing in trying to achieve reconciliation and peace, particularly the parliamentarian and presidential elections, the expansion of the authority of the Federal Government, coordinating international and regional efforts to promote the Somali economy and the writing off Somali debt by Arab States.

Our visit concluded with a meeting with Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom we discussed the situation in Syria and Mr. Staffan de Mistura's efforts there, developments in the Middle East peace process, the increased attention that could be given to the French initiative and the role that the Egypt and the United States Ambassadors could play to bring the parties back to the negotiating table, as well as the importance of finding consensus on some of the main issues that would allow for the launching of negotiations, including the establishment of two States on the basis of the 1967 borders. We also discussed the situation in Libya and the need to strengthen the country's institutions and win the confidence of the Libyan people so that they can achieve their ambitions and work to coordinate the efforts to fight ISIL under a unified joint command.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

On behalf of the Council I would like express my appreciation to all members of the Security Council and the Secretariat who participated in the mission for the way in which they accomplished their important tasks.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.